

Congressional Progressive Caucus

2022 In Review

The Congressional Progressive Caucus proved itself to be a force to be reckoned with during the first year of the 117th Congress — and cemented that legacy in its second year. The Caucus fully dispensed with the myth that progressives can't govern, pushing for the most progressive legislation possible while negotiating with colleagues in Congress and with the Biden administration to ensure landmark progressive legislation became law. The CPC and its members also continued their roles as thought leaders and advocates for economic and racial justice, issuing two executive action agendas reflecting the expertise and vision of progressive moments, both of which have already yielded significant results. It was the second year with the adoption of new bylaws and a new structure designed to allow the Caucus to be as effective as possible: to respond nimbly to changing circumstances, channel the voices of the progressive movement in Congress, and vote as a bloc. In 2022, the moment demanded aggressive, insistent legislating and advocacy on behalf of working people to take advantage of the governing moment. The CPC, with its largest-ever membership at 100 House members, met it with gusto.



The Congressional Progressive Caucus membership of the 117th Congress

The Most Productive Congress In Decades

In its second year, the 117th Congress sealed its place in the history books as one of the most productive Congresses in decades. There were many significant pieces of legislation passed and signed into law by the President this year, and they have the fingerprints of the Congressional Progressive Caucus all over them.

After more than a year of negotiations, legislation to deliver on Democrats' climate, tax fairness, and prescription drug priorities, the [Inflation Reduction Act](#), was signed into law in August. It's an achievement that would not have been possible without the Progressive Caucus. From the very beginning, progressives fought tooth and nail to advance the full scope of the President's economic agenda, holding the line multiple times to ensure that the Build Back Better Act was crafted and passed in the House. In its major provisions, the Inflation Reduction Act drew directly on that piece of legislation. It accomplished three significant pieces of that agenda: it is the largest ever federal investment in tackling the existential threat of climate change, lowers healthcare costs, and begins to ensure that corporations pay their fair share.

The Inflation Reduction Act cuts carbon emissions by 40 percent by 2030 through rapidly accelerating the adoption of renewable energy technologies such as electric vehicles, heat pumps, and solar panels, saving the average family [\\$1,025](#) a year in energy costs and creating [millions](#) of good jobs. It extends affordable health insurance coverage to 13 million people, caps seniors' yearly drug costs at \$2,000 per year, and caps insulin at \$35 per month for seniors on Medicare. It takes on Big Pharma by allowing, for the first time ever, Medicare to begin negotiating prices for a small group of drugs that will expand over time. The bill also imposes a 15 percent minimum tax on corporations, taxing corporations that inflate their share values through stock buybacks, and invests in the IRS to go after large corporations that evade taxes — all without raising taxes on any family making less than \$400,000 per year.

Essentially, the Inflation Reduction Act achieved Democrats' goals in a progressive way: lowering costs of necessities, creating good jobs, ensuring affordable health care for millions, and taking on climate change, all by ensuring the wealthy and corporations start paying their fair share.

The [CHIPS and Science Act](#) was also signed into law in August to deliver funding for semiconductors, which power everything from innovative technology to our phones and household appliances, and doubling the funding for the National

Science Foundation. The CPC guaranteed its passage in the House thanks to an agreement progressives negotiated with the Commerce Department to ensure guardrails against corporate self-enrichment and stock buybacks. The Secretary of Commerce [issued guidance](#) on taxpayer protections to that effect, including a commitment that the Department will not hesitate to claw back funds or pursue other remedies if companies misuse taxpayer dollars — a direct result of progressives' engagement with the Secretary and her team.

Continuing their leadership from 2021, progressives led or co-led most of the major legislation that passed the House this year. The [Respect for Marriage Act](#), led by House Judiciary Chair Representative Jerry Nadler (NY-10), to codify protections for same-sex and interracial marriages, became law. The [Right to Contraception Act](#), co-led by Representatives Nikema Williams (GA-05) and Sara Jacobs (CA-53), passed the House. Representative Carolyn Maloney (NY-12), chair of the House Oversight and Reform Committee, shepherded the [Postal Service Reform Act](#) into law, which will restore the financial stability of the United States Postal Service (USPS) by ending its requirement to prefund retiree health benefits and enrolling employees in Medicare, while guaranteeing six day-a-week postal service. CPC Deputy Whip Representative Andy Levin (MI-09) led the House to pass [H.Res. 915](#), a Resolution Recognizing the Rights of Congressional Workers to Organize, the first resolution allowing House of Representatives staff to unionize, which has already paved the way for staff in several offices to begin the collective bargaining process. Progressive advocacy was instrumental in passing the [Keep Kids Fed Act](#), legislation to extend the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s waiver authority to provide school meals for millions of children across the country, led by CPC Whip Representative Ilhan Omar (MN-05), Representatives Suzanne Bonamici (OR-01) and James P. McGovern (MA-02), and building on legislation from CPC members.

This year also saw the first major gun safety legislation passed in three decades. CPC Vice Chair Representative David N. Cicilline (RI-01) led the House passage of the [Assault Weapons Ban](#) for the first time since 1994. President Biden signed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act into law, which took steps to close the



‘boyfriend loophole’ and strengthen background checks; the bill drew on the [Protecting our Kids Act](#), legislation led by Rep. Nadler and passed through the House, including provisions to fund the implementation of extreme risk protection laws and prohibit straw purchasing.

After significant, deliberate negotiations, Progressive Caucus leaders secured a package that advanced evidence-based, holistic [legislation to address public safety](#). It included Deputy Chair Representative Katie Porter (CA-45)’s [Mental Health Justice Act](#) to send unarmed, trained first responders to those experiencing mental health crises and reduce fatal encounters between police and people with mental illness, and Representative Steven Horsford (NV-04)’s [Break the Cycle of Violence Act](#) to provide federal grants for communities for evidence-based violence intervention and prevention programs. This package was a step forward that allowed these essential public safety bills from progressives to be passed, but much remains to be done to address policing on the federal level — including passing Representative Karen Bass (CA-37)’s George Floyd Justice in Policing Act.

Under the leadership of CPC Deputy Whip and House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Representative Mark Takano (CA-41), the 117th Congress saw the advancement of significant legislation to support veterans. The [VA Employee Fairness Act](#), which would ensure the same collective bargaining rights for Veterans Affairs Title 38 health care professionals as all other federal health care professionals, and the [Veteran Service Recognition Act](#), which prevents the undue deportation of U.S. service members and veterans, both passed the House of Representatives. This summer, President Biden signed into law Rep. Takano’s Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act or [Honoring our PACT Act](#), the largest expansion of veterans’ benefits in decades. The landmark legislation expands VA health benefits to cover conditions related to toxic exposure, which affects more than 3.5 million veterans. Since it became law, hundreds of thousands of veterans have been able to access health care for cancers and other conditions through the VA, rather than paying out of pocket, and received toxic exposure screenings. It is clear that this law has already, and will continue to save lives.

Under the leadership of Representatives Nydia M. Velázquez (NY-07) and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14), the House of Representatives passed the [Puerto Rico Status Act](#), historic legislation to end the United States’ colonization of the island that will finally grant Puerto Ricans the right to self-determination and allow them to vote on their status with regard to the United States, whether for independence, statehood, or an alternative.

In FY2023 omnibus appropriations bill, progressives secured funding for key priorities including to increase funding for the National Labor Relations Board for the first time in nearly a decade, extend robust Medicaid funding for Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories, expand access to affordable housing and rental assistance for tens of thousands of families at risk of homelessness, extend the summer school meals program for low-income students, and more.

As part of the omnibus package, CPC members also secured the passage of significant legislation: Representative Jerry Nadler (NY-10)'s landmark [Pregnant Workers Fairness Act](#), which will ensure no worker can be fired or retaliated against on the job for needing reasonable accommodations for their pregnancy; Representative Joe Neguse (CO-02)'s Merger Filing Fee Modernization Act to continue antitrust reform; Representative Frank Pallone (NJ-06)'s [Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act](#), which expands programs and grants to improve mental health and treat substance abuse; and Representative Jan Schakowsky (IL-09)'s [INFORM Consumers Act](#), to combat online retail crime and identity theft.

Exercising Progressive Power

In the second year of the 117th Congress, the Progressive Caucus continued to build on its organizing prowess of the first year. By continuing to build power among the membership and invest in movement success with an inside-outside strategy, the CPC was able to not only pass legislation to invest in communities across the country, but also block measures that would harm them.

When the President and Speaker announced that Congress would take up a tentative agreement between railroads and unions to codify a worker contract without changes, progressives quickly organized to work to meet one of the workers' key outstanding demands for paid sick leave. Under the leadership of CPC members Representative Peter DeFazio (OR-04), chair of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and Executive Board member Representative Jamaal Bowman (NY-16), who led introduction of the amendment to this effect, they engaged in negotiations with House leadership and colleagues, consulted with progressive movements, key international unions and rank-and-file union members, and were able to force the House to vote on and attach legislation that would [add paid leave](#) to the contract. As a result, paid sick leave passed through the House of Representatives, and progressives forced a floor vote on the measure in the Senate, which failed by only three Republican votes.

The CPC also demonstrated significant power to block the Senate-proposed permitting reform, coined the ‘dirty deal’ by environmental justice activists and frontline communities. Rather than supporting the acceleration and expansion of renewable energy technology, the deal would, among other provisions, unilaterally greenlight the natural gas infrastructure of the Mountain Valley Pipeline, outside of the existing process for such projects and without input from the Appalachian residents who would be directly harmed by its construction. This would have entrenched new fossil fuel infrastructure, undermined judicial independence, rolled back environmental protection law, and impeded frontline communities’ input or ability to contest polluting infrastructure in their areas.

Opposition to the permitting deal was a prime example of progressives’ inside-outside strategy. Frontline communities and environmental justice and progressive groups raised the call from the grassroots for Congress to block this harmful deal, and progressives in the House and Senate organized. CPC Chair Emeritus and House Natural Resources Committee Chair Representative Raúl M. Grijalva spearheaded the opposition, issuing a [letter](#) to House leadership and articulating the call to keep permitting off the continuing resolution, with more than 70 members signed on. When votes for must-pass legislation came up in September and again in December, progressives were able to prevent the permitting deal from being attached, first to the continuing resolution, then in the National Defense Authorization Act, and finally in the year-end Appropriations Omnibus. House progressives were successful by organizing more than two-thirds of the Caucus with an [official CPC position](#), backed by relentless advocacy from movement partners.

Securing Executive Action Wins

The Progressive Caucus [released](#) its executive action agenda in March to raise wages, lower costs, and advance equity and justice. The slate covered eight policy areas to activate agencies across the federal government to affect change for all families who call America home: lowering health care costs, canceling federal student loan debt, expanding worker power and raising wages, advancing immigrants’ rights, delivering on the promise of equal justice under law, combatting the climate crisis and reducing fossil fuel dependence, investing in care economy jobs and standards, and regulating for economic and tax fairness. The full agenda would lower prescription drug costs for 38 million people, relieve the burden of student debt for more than 43 million

borrowers, give millions of workers a raise by increasing the overtime eligibility threshold to \$83,000, and more.

In the nine months since, President Biden and his administration have responded to progressives' call with action with real progress. The Biden administration has enacted orders to: [close](#) the ACA family glitch; employ the [Defense Production Act](#) to spur renewable energy technology; invest in communities while centering [environmental justice](#); protect Medicare and pare back the misguided Medicare Direct Contracting program; move to [end the use of Title 42](#); require public companies to disclose their [climate risk](#) with the SEC; help reduce use of force by [police officers](#) and demilitarize law enforcement; protect high-risk outdoor workers with a national workplace wind standard; [grant clemency](#); redesignate [Temporary Protected Status](#) for Afghanistan, Burma, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Haiti, South Sudan, and Syria, and extend it for El Salvador, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Venezuela; and take steps to [ensure immigrant workers](#) can report workplace misconduct without fear of retaliation.

In one of the most significant moves of the Biden Administration's first two years, and after extensive advocacy from the Progressive Caucus and movements across the country, the President also issued an executive order to [cancel student debt](#). Despite currently being held up in court due to a challenge from Republicans, the action provides much-needed relief for 43 million people — 20 million of whom will see their debt cancelled entirely — who can start to build lives without the burden of never-ending student loans.

After the Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the Progressive Caucus continued this leadership by issuing an [agenda](#) to protect reproductive freedom. It presented a roadmap for specific action to protect existing access to abortion and expand it to residents of states that would ban care. It was developed in consultation with movement partners, and included three areas of policymaking: abortion access executive actions, abortion access legislative actions, and legislative actions in response to the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* and related threats from the Supreme Court. In response, the Biden administration has taken [action](#) on a number of these proposals: ensuring people experiencing pregnancy-related complications cannot be turned away from emergency medical care — and putting the weight of the DOJ behind enforcing it; protecting the right to travel for abortion care; and ensuring pharmacies do not deny patients the medication they need.

Supporting Member Offices

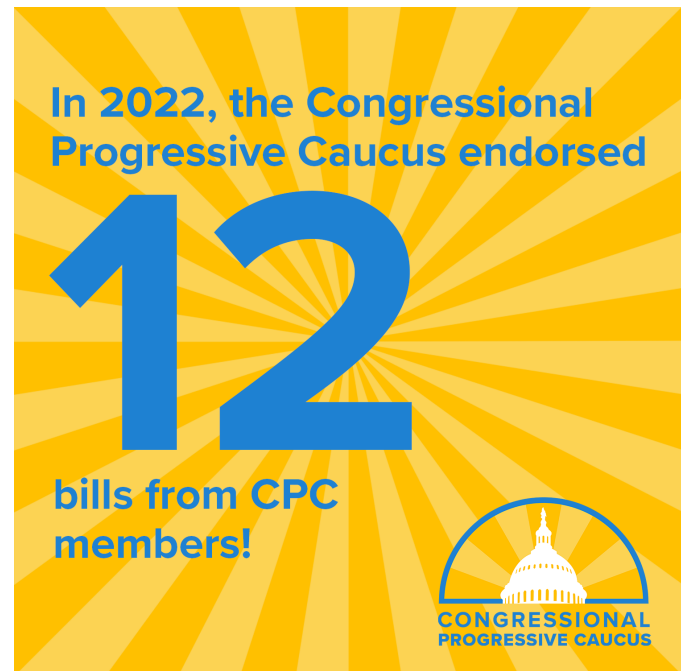
The Progressive Caucus staff continued to provide support for CPC member offices, including increased capacity on communications messaging, strategy, and execution; and on policy analysis and legislative strategy. The Caucus provided regular opportunities for information-sharing, learning, and community among staff; coalition-building between members, staff, and partners; and facilitated key relationship-building and advocacy moments for members and administration officials.

The Progressive Caucus Facilitated Meetings for Members and Staff With:

- Ali Zaidi, White House Climate Advisor
- Assistant Attorney General Jonathan Kanter
- Bill Samuel, Director of Government Affairs, AFL-CIO
- Deborah Parker, CEO, National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition
- Democratic Whip-Elect Representative Katherine Clark (MA-05)
- Economists Rakeen Mabud, Lauren Melodia, and Josh Bivens
- George Beebe, Director of Grand Strategy, Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft
- Heidi Shierholz, Economic Policy Institute
- Jacqueline Ayers, Senior Vice President of Policy, Organizing, and Campaigns, Planned Parenthood Federation of America
- Jennifer Dalven, Director, ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project
- John Podesta
- Kelley Robinson, Executive Director, Planned Parenthood Action Fund
- Liz Schuler, President, AFL-CIO
- Lori Wallach, Director, ReThink Trade, American Economic Liberties Project
- Maurice Mitchell, Director, Working Families Party
- Michael Regan, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
- Minority Leader-Elect Representative Hakeem Jeffries (NY-08)
- Mitch Landrieu, White House Senior Advisor for Infrastructure Implementation
- Navan Ward, President, American Association for Justice
- Rohit Chopra, Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
- Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm
- Secretary of Health and Human Services Xavier Becerra
- Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas
- Secretary John Kerry
- Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh
- Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY)
- Stephen Miles, President, Win Without War
- Stephen Wertheim, Senior Fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Tess Bridgeman, Co-Editor in Chief, Just Security
- U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai

The Congressional Progressive Caucus also endorsed the following bills from CPC members:

- H.R. 8105 - The Good Jobs for Good Airports Act (Rep. Jesús G. “Chuy” García, IL-04)
- H.R. 6005 - Access to Birth Control Act (Rep. Carolyn Maloney, NY-12)
- H.R. 7792 - Water Data Act (Rep. Melanie Stansbury, NM-01)
- H.R. 3115 - The Universal School Meals Program Act (Rep. Ilhan Omar, MN-05 and Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-V.T.)
- H.R. 7647 - The Supreme Court Ethics, Recusal, and Transparency Act (Rep. Henry C. “Hank” Johnson, Jr., GA-04; Rep. Mondaire Jones, NY-17; and Rep. Jerry Nadler, NY-10)
- H.R. 7439 - The Energy Security and Independence Act of 2022 (Rep. Cori Bush, MO-01)
- H.R. 6583 - The Stop the Wait Act (Rep. Lloyd Doggett, TX-35)
- H.Res. 915 - Resolution to grant congressional staff in the U.S. House of Representatives the right to organize and bargain collectively (Rep. Andy Levin MI-09)
- H.R. 2584 - The Judiciary Act of 2021 (Rep. Henry C. “Hank” Johnson, Jr., GA-04; Rep. Mondaire Jones, NY-17; Rep. Jerry Nadler, NY-10; and Sen. Ed Markey, D-M.A.)
- H.R. 3525 - Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of Asian Pacific American History and Culture Act (Rep. Grace Meng, NY-06)
- H.R. 6396 - The Climate RESILIENCE Act (Rep. Earl Blumenauer, OR-03)
- H.R. 6492 - The Climate Resilience Workforce Act (Rep. Pramila Jayapal, WA-07)



Conclusion

The totality of Democrats' legislative and executive accomplishments this year underscores the most consequential progressive success: the President's agenda is a progressive agenda. Decades of organizing and advocacy by movements, paradigm-shifting political campaigns from progressive candidates unafraid to run bold, transformative platforms, and tireless advocacy from members of Congress have set a new standard for people-centered policymaking. Loudly advocating for workers' rights and higher wages, embracing the fight for abortion access, taking on corporate greed, climate action, and student debt cancellation — these would not be central parts of the Biden legacy without progressive influence.

Of course, we would have preferred for the President's entire agenda to become law — but we have positioned ourselves for the next governing moment to build on this success and see it to fruition, having won the argument for that full agenda with the American people and with 99 percent of Congressional Democrats. Going into the 118th Congress, our Caucus and our movement are primed for more executive action wins, and to lay the groundwork for 2024.

Like everything we do at the CPC, the success of 2022 would not have been possible without partners in the progressive movement. It is our shared commitment and our inside-outside collaboration that has made all of this, and more, possible.

Going forward, progressives inside and outside Congress have our commitment and our strategy. We have proven that when Americans send progressives to Congress, they organize on the inside, engage in savvy governing, and work with colleagues to advance the Democratic agenda. We have made clear that activists are not ancillary to the Democratic party — they are the Democratic party, and will hold their representatives accountable. With an organized Caucus on the inside, a set of shared goals inside and outside, a shared understanding of the work and our roles in it, and a shared vision for a just and equitable future, we will continue to fight for working people and deliver for communities across the country.

With Special Thanks To

The CPC Executive Board for the 117th Congress

Representative Pramila Jayapal, Chair
Representative Katie Porter, Deputy Chair
Representative Ilhan Omar, Whip
Representative Raúl Grijalva, Chair Emeritus
Representative Barbara Lee, Chair Emeritus
Representative Mark Pocan, Chair Emeritus
Representative Jamie Raskin, Vice Chair for Policy
Representative Joe Neguse, Vice Chair for New Members
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Representative Andy Levin, Deputy Whip
Representative Mark Takano, Deputy Whip
Representative Jan Schakowsky, Executive Board Member At-Large
Representative Jamaal Bowman, Special Order Hour Convener
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